CHAPTER 52 YUKARI YAKUMO'S PEACE

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東方鈴奈庵

～Forbidden Scrollery.

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CHERRY BLOSSOMS SURE ARE PRETTY WHEN THEY BLOOM,

BUT THEY'RE ONLY GOING TO SCATTER NOW.

ALL THE FLOWERS BLOOMED AT ONCE.

HELLO THERE.

INTO FULL BLOOM, I MEAN.

I FEEL LIKE THEY'RE BEING RUSHED.

THUD

I WAS THINKING MAYBE YOU COULD USE A HELPING HAND?

WELL, BETTER TO HAVE ONE HAND THAN NO HANDS.

OH, HEY.

YOU'RE PRETTY EARLY.

I'M NOT GETTING ANYTHING READY YET.

BUT MIRACLES DO HAPPEN.

?

THAT'S TRUE, I GUESS,

I THOUGHT THAT THE BLOSSOMS WERE BUDDING LATE THIS YEAR, BUT THEN THEY BLOOMED SUDDENLY.

SPEAKING OF MIRACLES...

YOU DON'T SEEM TO CAUSE MIRACLES VERY OFTEN THOUGH

.....

Ability: Causing miracles to occur

WELL, MAKING MIRACLES IS EXACTLY MY LINE OF WORK!

* HANAMI = FLOWER VIEWING

LOOK, EVEN THE ATMOSPHERE IN THE HAKUREI SHRINE IS NOT QUITE THE SAME AS USUAL.

IT'S SOLEMN, SOMEHOW.

MM, A RUMOR IN THE WIND, I GUESS...

WOOSH

WOO--

I FEEL LIKE PREVIOUS HANAMI WEREN'T THIS PEACEFUL.

I HEARD THAT YOU WERE PLANNING SOMETHING DIFFERENT THAN USUAL.

ABOUT TODAY'S HANAMI,*

WHO TOLD YOU THAT?

BUT I THINK YOU'RE SEEING EVIL WHERE THERE'S NONE.

USUALLY, WHEN IT'S THIS PEACEFUL, IT'S GONNA STAY LIKE THIS TOO.

OH, I SEE, THAT'S WHY YOU CAME SO EARLY.

'CAUSE YOU FELT THAT SOMETHING'S UP.

Thank you sincerely for your cooperation.

HOW FORTUNATE MEETING YOU HERE OF ALL PLACES.

KRSH

OH,

MISS HIEDA ...

COULD YOU LEND ME A MINUTE OR TWO OF YOUR TIME?

I'M CURRENTLY UNCOVERING THE TRUTH BEHIND THE DISAPPEARANCE OF LITTLE KOSUZU.

THE TIMES SURE HAVE BECOME QUITE PEACEFUL FOR YOU TO BE BRAZENLY DOING INTERVIEWS IN THE HUMAN VILLAGE, HUH?

OH, THE TENGU JOURNALIST.

IF YOU COULD GIVE ME SOME OF THE INFORMATION YOU HAVE,

MAYBE WE COULD SHARE OUR INFORMATION IN A TRADE?

WAIT!

YOU'RE WORKING ON THAT CASE?

I CAN'T PERSONALLY TELL YOU ANY-

I have no reason to hide any information from you.

Those Tengu sure have their way with words, huh.

WHY, OF COURSE.

BECAUSE YOU ARE THE CLERK OF GENSOKYO FROM THE HIEDA FAMILY...

YES, THAT FITS WITH THE RARE OCCURRENCES OF PREVIOUS KIDNAPPINGS WHICH HAVE HAPPENED BEFORE

SINCE THE HUMAN VILLAGE TOOK ITS CURRENT FORM.

SO YOU ARE ASSUMING SHE WAS KIDNAPPED BY A YOUKAI?

ABSO-LUTELY NOT!

CLEAR

ALTHOUGH, I DID HEAR A RUMOR THAT KOSUZU HERSELF WAS QUITE FASCINATED WITH YOUKAI.

COULD IT BE POSSIBLE THAT SHE LEFT OF HER OWN VOLITION?

I SEE,

ALTHOUGH THIS ONE MAY BE FACTUALLY DIFFERENT FROM THE PREVIOUS ONES...

GLANCE

THIS INCIDENT CAUSED LESS PANIC THAN A YOUKAI KIDNAPPING WOULD HAVE.

I ASKED THIS BECAUSE, FROM A HUMAN PERSPECTIVE,

EVEN IF THE POSSIBILITY EXISTED, IT IS EXTREMELY UNLIKELY.

... THAT SAID,

SCRIBBLE

SCRIBBLE

WE KNOW THAT SHE DISAPPEARED WITHOUT A TRACE.

WELL, WE DO HAVE A FEW CLUES IN THAT REGARD.

WE DON'T KNOW WHO IT WAS, OR WHAT THEIR AIM WAS.

BUT LET'S ASSUME THAT IT WAS INDEED A YOUKAI.

IN FACT, WE DON'T KNOW ANYTHING AT ALL...

THEREFORE, I CAN ONLY THINK OF ONE POSSIBILITY:

THIS DOES NOT ADEQUATELY EXPLAIN A NORMAL KIDNAPPING OR A DISAPPEARANCE.

WHETHER A HUMAN IS ALIVE OR NOT, AS LONG AS THEY HAVE A SOUL, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE NOT TO LEAVE SOME SORT OF TRACE.

INDEED.

ANOTHER WORLD?!

MAYBE SHE DRIFTED INTO ANOTHER WORLD?

THE NETHERWORLD, HEAVEN, HELL, AND MANY MORE...

I DON'T THINK I HAVE TO EXPLAIN IT TO GENSOKYO'S SECRETARY,

BUT THERE ARE A GREAT NUMBER OF OTHER WORLDS ASIDE FROM GENSOKYO—

ASSUMING THAT, IT'S LIKELY THAT SHE WAS SPIRITED AWAY TO ANOTHER WORLD.

ONE OF THESE WORLDS WITH AN ESPECIALLY SIMPLE REQUIREMENT IS THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

IN THOSE OTHER WORLDS, IF YOU DO NOT MEET SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS, OR IF YOU DO NOT HAVE THE STRENGTH, YOU CANNOT GO TO OR COME FROM THEM.

I SEE.

SST

BUT UNFORTUNATELY, WE TENGU CANNOT INVESTIGATE THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

WE'RE QUITE STUMPED OURSELVES.

THAT WAS MY CONCLUSION...

コンプエース

TURN!

BY THE WAY,

THERE SEEMS TO BE A HANAMI TONIGHT AT THE HAKUREI SHRINE.

IF SHE REALLY WAS SPIRITED AWAY,

THEN WE CAN ONLY WAIT UNTIL THE ISSUE SETTLES ITSELF.

I'VE HEARD THAT IT'S GOING TO BE A BIT OF A STRANGE PARTY, AND A LARGE ONE TOO.

YES,

A HANAMI?

ATTENDEES ARE LIMITED THOUGH...

INTER-ESTING ...

I AM AFRAID TO GO ALL THE WAY TO THE SHRINE BY MYSELF AT NIGHT,

SO I WAS WONDERING IF YOU COULD BE MY BODYGUARD.

BUT I WAS NEVER PERSONALLY INVITED.

UNTIL NOW, I'VE PARTICIPATED IN SOME HANAMI,

HOWEVER, THIS TIME SHE SAID SHE WANTED ME TO COME.

THAT'S THE THING.

WELL, HAVE YOU BEEN INVITED THEN?

YES, THAT'S WHAT I WANTED TO DISCUSS WITH YOU.

WEAK.

BUT YOUR BODY IS CERTAINLY...

AND?

ARE YOU GOING?

BUT SINCE TENGU PRIDE THEMSELVES IN KIDNAPPING HUMANS,

FLYING ME THERE IN ONE SHORT JUMP WOULD BE NO BIG TASK, WOULD IT?

INDEED,

BUT...

I'M A TENGU.

BODY-GUARD?

WHAT?

AND I THINK YOU NEED TO SEE TONIGHT'S HANAMI.

I THINK IT'S FINE IF I BRING SOMEONE WITH ME TO TODAY'S PARTY,

AS THE FASTEST IN ALL OF GENSOKYO,

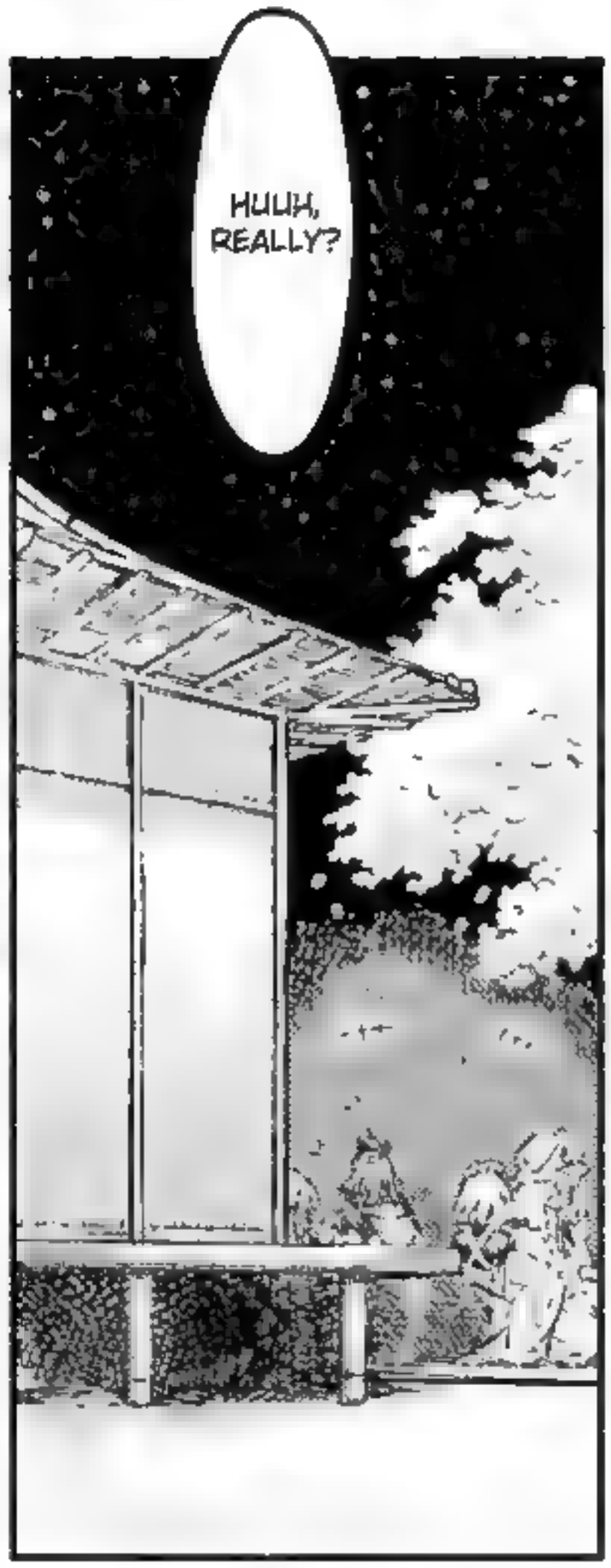
LET IT BE MY DUTY TO PERSONALLY ACCOMPANY YOU TO THE SHRINE!

OHO.

IT CERTAINLY LOOKS LIKE THAT HANAMI IS GOING TO BE A SPECIAL ONE IN SOME SORT OF WAY, HUH.

VERY WELL!

YA,
THAT WAS QUITE THE OLD YOUKAI.
IT WAS LIKE A NAMELESS DEVIL IN SHADOWS!
I HAD NO IDEA THAT SUCH A YOUKAI EVEN EXISTED.


HUUH, REALLY?

PARDON ME?!
I'M STILL A YOUNG LASS!
HEEY!
BETWEEN YOU AND IT, I WONDER WHICH IS OLDER?

RUSTLE
WELL WELL WELL, Y'SEE...

IT WAS SEALED IN THIS SCROLL FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS,
AND DURING THAT TIME IT ACQUIRED QUITE AN EVIL POWER.
This scroll...?
WHAT IS THAT?
THE ILLUSTRATED SCROLL OF THE NIGHT PARADE OF ONE HUNDRED DEMONS.

SO,
WHY DO YOU BRING UP THIS OLD YOUKAI NOW?

T'WAS THE NIGHT OF A MADDENING FULL-MOON.

WELL? HOW ABOUT I TELLS YA A LIL' STORY OF MINE?

WHEN I FOUGHT AGAINST THAT WICKED NIGHT PARADE.

MY LITTLE UNDERLING FOLKS COULDN'T BEAT IT ON THEIR OWN.

IT HAD AN UNTHINKABLE POWER.

EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE SO NUMEROUS?

BE VICTORIOUS AGAINST IT,

WON'T SOMEONE FINALLY

GULP

THOSE WHO ARE NOT KNOCKED OUT, TAKE KOSUZU AWAY!

YOU THERE!

FETCH ME THAT SCROLL!

HUZZAH, WE DID IT!

IT'S FINALLY MY TIME TO BRING DOWN THE HOUSE!

GRIN

WELL THEN, YOU'VE ALL WAITED FOR THIS, HUH.

What could have possibly happened on that night...!?

TO BE CONTINUED IN SEPTEMBER ISSUE

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